

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 21, 2006. Claims 1-5, 8-12 and 15-37 are pending in the application and are rejected in the Office Action. Claims 1, 19 and 27 have been amended, and Claims 9-10, 21-22, and 29-30 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. For the reasons discussed below, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Section 103 Rejections

The Examiner rejects Claims 1-3, 5, 8-12, and 31-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,680,933 issued to Cheesman et al. ("*Cheesman*"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,374,303 issued to Armitage ("*Armitage*"). For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of Claims 1-3, 5, 8-12, and 15-37.

Claim 11 recites the following limitations:

A method of communicating connectionless and connection oriented signals using at least one common network element, comprising:

receiving connectionless signals and connection oriented signals at a first network element comprising an ingress core network element, each signal including a transport label having a format field identifying a signaling type associated with the signal, a label value field containing information useful in processing the signal according to its signaling type, and a stack of sub-transport labels, each sub-transport label providing an instruction regarding the associated signal's communication toward one of the destination peripheral network element, and wherein the top sub-transport label identifies a node identification useful in determining a next hop for a connectionless signal or a path identification useful in determining a virtual circuit for a connection oriented signal, and wherein the bottom sub-transport label includes an interface identifier operable to specify an interface of an egress core network element between the ingress core network element processing the signal and the destination peripheral network element;

for each signal, examining the format field of the transport label to determine the signal's signaling type;

for each signal, interpreting the information in the label value field of the transport label according to the signal type; and

for each signal, communicating the signal to another network element using signaling procedures associated with the signal's signaling type.

Claim 11 is allowable because neither *Cheesman* nor *Armitage*, alone or in combination, disclose, teach, or suggest a transport label having a stack of sub-transport labels where the top sub-transport label identifies a node identification useful in determining a next hop for a connectionless signal or a path identification useful in determining a virtual circuit for a connection oriented signal, and the bottom sub-transport label includes an interface identifier operable to specify an interface of an egress core network element between the ingress core network element processing the signal and the destination peripheral network element.

On page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner provides an interpretation of the term “interface identifier” as being “information for specifying a path through the network from the core network element to the destination network element.” However, as Applicants have previously argued, the passages on which the Examiner bases this interpretation are describing the entire interface identifier *table* 120, not just one interface identifier. As recited in the claim, an interface identifier specifies an *interface of an egress core network element* between the ingress core network element and the destination peripheral network element, not a “path through the network.”

More specifically, the cited passage at page 11, lines 16-21 states that “*Interface ID look-up table 120* may include, for example, information specifying addresses of interfaces facilitating communication between a core network element 14 and various peripheral network elements 18-24.” The cited passage at page 18, lines 15-29 states that “core network element 14 [reads] the associated label value 224 as *an interface identifier specifying a particular interface within an egress core network element 14 to a particular peripheral network element 18-24.*” Similarly, the passage at page 21, lines 4-14 states that “egress core network element 14 . . . uses the interface ID in label value field 224n to index its interface ID look-up table 122 and *identify an interface between the egress core network element 14 and the destination peripheral network element 18-24.*” In addition, the passage at page 31, lines 3-16 similarly states that “egress network element 14 may use the interface ID as an index to interface ID look-up table 120 *to identify the correct interface between that core network element 14 and the destination peripheral network element 18-24.*” From each of

these passages, it is abundantly clear that the interface identifier specifies an *interface of an egress core network element* between the ingress core network element and the destination peripheral network element, not a path through the network. Furthermore, and more importantly, this is precisely what is recited in Claim 11. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's interpretation of the claim element is not only inconsistent with the specification, but also contrary to the explicit wording of the claim itself. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide a response to the foregoing arguments presented by the Applicants.

Since neither *Cheesman* nor *Armitage* discloses such an interface identifier as claimed, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 11 is patentably distinguishable from the cited references and request that the rejection of Claim 11 be withdrawn. In addition, Claims 12 and 15-18 depend from Claim 11. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 12 and 15-18 are patentably distinguishable from the cited references for at least the same reasons as those discussed above regarding Claims 11.

Furthermore, independent Claims 1, 19 and 27 have been amended to include limitations that are similar to the limitations of Claim 11 discussed above. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants request reconsideration and favorable with respect to these claims, as well as Claims 2-5, 8, 20, 23-26, 28, and 31-37, which depend from one of these independent claims.

The Examiner also rejects Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Cheesman* in view of *Armitage* and further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,628,649 issued to Raj et al. Claim 4 depends from, and incorporates all the limitations of, independent Claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claim 4 for the reasons given above with respect to Claim 1.

CONCLUSION

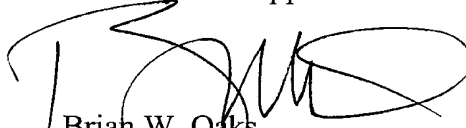
Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Brian W. Oaks, Attorney for Applicants, at the Examiner's convenience at (214) 953-6986.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 25, 2006

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